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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
INFO DARFUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS STATE 028317

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SUDAN) DEMARCHE ON DEALING WITH SUDANESE
PRESIDENT BASHIR DURING HIS VISIT TO CAIRO

REF: DOHA 193 KHARTOUM 401; KHARTOUM 408; AND KHARTOUM 409

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see instructions in paragraph 3 and the talking points that follow.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (SBU) In advance of the March 30-31 Arab League Summit in Doha, President President Omar al-Bashir, for whom the International Criminal Court (ICC) recently issued an arrest warrant, is disregarding the warrant and continues to travel in the region, including a March 23 trip to Eritrea and one planned to Egypt for March 25. While there are indications Bashir is rethinking his attendance at the Arab League summit and may send a replacement (reftel), we need to look beyond the summit and instead focus on how best to engage Arab League member states to avert humanitarian disaster in Darfur. This demarche seeks to sensitize Egypt to the fate of Darfuri, almost all of whom are Muslim, as a result of Bashir's March 4/5 expulsion orders, and help the Government realize that it is not in Egypt's best interest to be implicated in Bashir's unsavory humanitarian choices. We also seek to reiterate that Arab League leaders should refrain from making an Article 16 deferral of ICC action against Bashir a primary focus of the upcoming summit.

¶3. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST EMBASSY CAIRO: Post is instructed to draw from points outlined below for delivery to appropriate officials as soon as possible.

-- The USG appreciates Egypt's commitment to peace in Sudan, especially as exemplified by Egypt's contribution to peacekeeping in Darfur ((infantry battalion and an engineering companion).

-- The US believes Egypt is an influential regional partner, and has the potential to be a useful force on the Darfur peace process. Egypt should seize this opportunity to demonstrate leadership by urging Sudan to take positive actions that will bring peace to the sub region.

-- However, the US is strongly concerned about President Bashir's visit to Egypt. Welcoming Bashir in Egypt so soon after the ICC decision sends a bad signal. Egypt now joins the ranks of Eritrea - the only other country he has visited to date.

-- We urge Egypt to use this opportunity to focus on how to urgently remedy the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur where millions of innocent people (Muslims) are at risk.

-- As a sovereign nation, Sudan must be responsible for its decisions. The expelled groups represent as much as 60 percent of the humanitarian relief efforts in Darfur. Their expulsion jeopardizes life saving assistance to over a million vulnerable Darfuris in sectors such as water, health care, and food aid. It also places 40,000 people at risk for lack of food assistance in Abyei, for example.

-- A joint UN-GOS assessment of the affected areas in Darfur has been done and preliminary results show that the expulsion

has left significant gaps in basic assistance that, if not addressed successfully , will cause disastrous humanitarian conditions in the next few months, or even weeks in the case of water. (NOTE: Bashir has been making special efforts to woo Arab and Islamic NGOs to fill the gaps created by the expulsion. END NOTE)

-- We do not accept any justification for tying the denial of urgent humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable victims of violence in Darfur to the ICC decision issuing an arrest warrant for President Bashir or discussions of Article 16 as a quid pro quo.

-- We do not seek to escalate this crisis; however, unless and until the Sudanese Government demonstrates its willingness to shoulder the responsibility for the situation it has created, the United States is fully prepared to pursue a more robust international response. We hope to avoid this outcome.

-- The US looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Egypt in these critical objectives of providing civilian protection and stability in the Darfur region.

End Points.

REPORTING DEADLINE & POINT OF CONTACT

16. (U) Post may convey demarche responses by March 26 to AF/SPG Olukemi Yai via phone or e-mail. Please contact either for additional information, as needed.

CLINTON